
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Justice

B.C. offers increased protection for those at risk of family violence

VANCOUVER – Government is acting to ensure greater safety and protection of those experiencing or are at risk of family violence, by using professional process servers for delivery of protection orders at no cost to applicants, in all regions of the province.

This change means more than 1,000 applicants will no longer need to arrange for a friend or family member to serve a protection order or hire a professional process server when a respondent is not present in court to receive the order.

This model strengthens the ability of police to enforce protection orders and of Crown counsel to prosecute breach charges as contracted process servers will ensure the affidavit of service is properly completed, filed in a court registry and made accessible to police services through the Protection Order Registry.

B.C.'s Family Law Act (FLA) introduced protection orders to help courts more effectively deal with family violence situations. The FLA was created to meet the needs of B.C. families and to help them navigate significant changes and decisions in their lives, such as separation and divorce, and the division of property and parenting arrangements for children when couples split up.

Quotes:

Suzanne Anton, Attorney General and Minister of Justice –

“The safety and security of those who have experienced or are at risk of family violence is a top priority for our government. This new service provides vulnerable families with the security of knowing that the protection order will be served by a professional, which will facilitate enforcement under the Criminal Code if the order is breached. The use of process servers is one more way our government is enhancing access to justice for British Columbians.”

Stephanie Cadieux, Minister of Children and Family Development –

“Domestic violence can have devastating and long-term effects on families, especially when children witness abuse. Taking the responsibility of delivering a protection order away from families will ease the burden at a time of great stress and mean they can focus on what really matters: rebuilding their lives.”

Tracy Porteous, executive director Ending Violence Association of B.C. –

“Protection orders are a critical link to safety for women and families trying to cope with domestic violence. Having an intermediary serve these orders will act as an important

protective shield so that women and their families are not put at further risk having to be the serve these orders themselves. This announcement today is both welcome and necessary, bravo."

Joanne Baker, executive director, BC Society of Transition Houses –

"Women experiencing violence – and the threat of violence – require a legal system that responds to their needs in a safe, secure and timely manner. We hope that this new option of using professional process servers results in the efficient, sensitive and safe service of protection orders for families throughout the province."

Quick Facts:

- Of the approximate 1,800 FLA protection orders issued each year, about a thousand are issued when the respondent is not present in the courtroom.
- The one-year contract for process servers was awarded to Dye and Durham Corporation of B.C. and includes two renewal options of one year each.
- The three busiest locations for protection orders are Vancouver, New Westminster and Surrey, but there is a need for protection orders in every region of the province.
- The Family Law Act was developed after consultations with more than 500 organizations, community groups, the legal community, other stakeholders and members of the public.
- The new law replaces the outdated Family Relations Act, which took effect in 1979.

Learn More:

- More information about protection orders is available at:
<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=1EC3518EDE724BA4A25DB464574E0049>

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